

1. A method of advertising, comprising:
  - presenting a menu possible advertisements to a user to permit the user to select an advertisement to view;
  - receiving a user selection of an advertisement to view; and
  - merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are presented to the user.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving the selected advertisement from an advertising server.
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising presenting a menu of advertisement types to the user for selection.
4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the advertisement types include at least one of a conventional commercial segment, a banner advertisement and a watermark advertisement.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the entertainment content.

1           6.     The method according to claim 1, wherein the selected advertisement is  
2     received via a modem.

3  
4           7.     The method according to claim 1, wherein the selected advertisement is  
5     received via a television channel.

6  
7           8.     The method according to claim 1, wherein the menu comprises a scrolling  
8     banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

9  
10          9.     The method according to claim 1, wherein the menu is presented without  
11     simultaneous entertainment content.

12  
13          10.    The method according to claim 1, wherein the menu is presented within a  
14     window appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

15  
16          11.    The method according to claim 3, wherein the menu comprises a scrolling  
17     banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

18  
19          12.    The method according to claim 3, wherein the menu is presented without  
20     simultaneous entertainment content.

1 13. The method according to claim 3, wherein the menu is presented within a  
2 window simultaneously with entertainment content.

3  
4 14. The method according to claim 3, wherein the advertisement and the  
5 advertisement type is presented to the user in a single menu.

6  
7 15. The method according to claim 1, further comprising caching the selected  
8 advertisement in a storage device within a set-top box.

9  
10 16. The method according to claim 1, further comprising caching the selected  
11 advertisement in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

12  
13 17. The method according to claim 1, wherein the presenting of the menu takes  
14 place as a result of receipt of a signal from the user requesting the presentation of  
15 the menu.  
16

1 18. An electronic storage medium containing instructions which, when executed  
2 on a programmed processor carry out a process of advertising, comprising:  
3 presenting a menu of possible advertisements to a user to permit the user  
4 to select an advertisement to view;  
5 receiving a user selection of an advertisement to view;  
6 receiving the selected advertisement from an advertising server; and  
7 merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that  
8 both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are presented to the  
9 user.

10  
11 19. The storage medium according to claim 18, further comprising presenting  
12 a menu of advertisement types to the user for selection.

13  
14 20. The storage medium according to claim 19, wherein the advertisement types  
15 include at least one of a conventional commercial segment, a banner  
16 advertisement and a watermark advertisement.

17  
18 21. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein merging the  
19 advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the  
20 advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the  
21 entertainment content.

1 22. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the selected  
2 advertisement is received via a modem.

3  
4 23. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the selected  
5 advertisement is received via a television channel.

6  
7 24. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the menu comprises  
8 a scrolling banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

9  
10 25. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the menu is presented  
11 without simultaneous entertainment content.

12  
13 26. The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the menu is presented  
14 within a window appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

15  
16 27. The storage medium according to claim 19, wherein the menu comprises  
17 a scrolling banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

18  
19 28. The storage medium according to claim 19, wherein the menu is presented  
20 without simultaneous entertainment content.

1        29.    The storage medium according to claim 19, wherein the menu is presented  
2        within a window simultaneously with entertainment content.

3  
4        30.    The storage medium according to claim 18, wherein the advertisement and  
5        the advertisement type is presented to the user in a single menu.

6  
7        31.    The storage medium according to claim 18, further comprising caching the  
8        selected advertisement in a storage device within a set-top box.

9  
10       32.    The storage medium according to claim 18, further comprising caching the  
11       selected advertisement in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

1        33.    A set-top box, comprising:

2            a programmed processor that presents a user with a menu of  
3        advertisements;

4            means for receiving a user selection of a selected advertisement from the  
5        menu of advertisements;

6            advertisement receiving means for receiving the selected advertisement from  
7        a service provider;

8            content receiving means for receiving entertainment content from the service  
9        provider; and

10           the programmed processor merging the entertainment content with the  
11        advertisement for presentation to the user.

12  
13        34.    The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a storage device  
14        forming a part of the set-top box to store the selected advertisement.

15  
16        35.    The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a storage device  
17        coupled to the set-top box to store the selected advertisement.

18  
19        36.    The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the advertisement receiving  
20        means comprises a tuner.

1 37. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the advertisement receiving  
2 means comprises a modem.

3  
4 38. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the means for receiving a user  
5 selection comprises an interface to a remote control device.

6  
7 39. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the programmed processor  
8 further presents a menu of advertisement types to the user for selection.

9  
10 40. The apparatus according to claim 39, wherein the advertisement types  
11 include at least one of a conventional commercial segment, a banner  
12 advertisement and a watermark advertisement.

13  
14 41. The apparatus according to claim 39, wherein merging the advertisement  
15 with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the advertisement at a  
16 location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the entertainment  
17 content.

18  
19 42. The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a modem and  
20 wherein the selected advertisement is received via the modem.

1 43. The apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a tuner and wherein  
2 the selected advertisement is received via a television channel tuned by the tuner.

3  
4 44. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the programmed processor  
5 presents a menu comprises a scrolling banner menu appearing simultaneously  
6 with entertainment content.

7  
8 45. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the programmed processor  
9 presents the menu without simultaneous entertainment content.

10  
11 46. The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the programmed processor  
12 presents the menu within a window appearing simultaneously with entertainment  
13 content.

14  
15 47. The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the menu comprises a  
16 scrolling banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

17  
18 48. The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the menu is presented without  
19 simultaneous entertainment content.

20  
21 49. The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the menu is presented within  
22 a window simultaneously with entertainment content.

1        50.    The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the advertisement and the  
2        advertisement type is presented to the user in a single menu.

3  
4        51.    The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the means for receiving a user  
5        selection further comprises means for receiving a signal from the user requesting  
6        the presentation of the menu.

1        52.    A method of advertising, comprising:  
2                presenting a menu of possible types of advertisements to a user to permit  
3        the user to select a type of advertisement to view;  
4                receiving a user selection of a type of advertisement to view;  
5                receiving an advertisement of the selected advertisement type from an  
6        advertising server; and  
7                merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that  
8        both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are presented to the  
9        user.

10  
11        53.    The method according to claim 52, further comprising presenting a menu of  
12        advertisements to the user for selection.

13  
14        54.    The method according to claim 52, wherein the advertisement types include  
15        at least one of a conventional commercial segment, a banner advertisement and  
16        a watermark advertisement.

17  
18        55.    The method according to claim 52, wherein merging the advertisement with  
19        the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the advertisement at a  
20        location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the entertainment  
21        content.

1 56. The method according to claim 52, wherein the selected advertisement is  
2 received via a modem.

3  
4 57. The method according to claim 52, wherein the selected advertisement is  
5 received via a television channel.

6  
7 58. The method according to claim 52, wherein the menu comprises a scrolling  
8 banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

9  
10 59. The method according to claim 52, wherein the menu is presented without  
11 simultaneous entertainment content.

12  
13 60. The method according to claim 52, wherein the menu is presented within a  
14 window appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

15  
16 61. The method according to claim 52, further comprising caching the selected  
17 advertisement in a storage device within a set-top box.

18  
19 62. The method according to claim 52, further comprising caching the selected  
20 advertisement in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

1        63.    The method according to claim 52, wherein the advertisement is merged  
2        with the stored entertainment content at a service provider.

3  
4        64.    The method according to claim 52, wherein the advertisement is merged  
5        with the stored entertainment content at a service provider head end.

6  
7        65.    The method according to claim 52, wherein the advertisement is merged  
8        with the stored entertainment content at a set-top box.

1        66.    An electronic storage medium containing instructions which, when carried  
2            out by a programmed processor, implements a method of advertising,  
3            comprising:  
4            presenting a menu possible types of advertisements to a user to permit the  
5            user to select a type of advertisement to view;  
6            receiving a user selection of a type of advertisement to view;  
7            receiving an advertisement of the selected advertisement type from an  
8            advertising server; and  
9            merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that  
10          both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are presented to the  
11          user.

12  
13        67.    The storage medium according to claim 66, further comprising presenting  
14          a menu of advertisements to the user for selection.

15  
16        68.    The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the advertisement types  
17          include at least one of a conventional commercial segment, a banner  
18          advertisement and a watermark advertisement.  
19  
20

1 69. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein merging the  
2 advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the  
3 advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the  
4 entertainment content.

5  
6 70. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the selected  
7 advertisement is received via a modem.

8  
9 71. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the selected  
10 advertisement is received via a television channel.

11  
12 72. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the menu comprises  
13 a scrolling banner menu appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

14  
15 73. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the menu is presented  
16 without simultaneous entertainment content.

17  
18 74. The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the menu is presented  
19 within a window appearing simultaneously with entertainment content.

20  
21 75. The storage medium according to claim 66, further comprising caching the  
22 selected advertisement in a storage device within a set-top box.

1        76.    The storage medium according to claim 66, further comprising caching the  
2        selected advertisement in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

3  
4        77.    The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the advertisement is  
5        merged with the stored entertainment content at a service provider.

6  
7        78.    The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the advertisement is  
8        merged with the stored entertainment content at a service provider head end.

9  
10       79.    The storage medium according to claim 66, wherein the advertisement is  
11       merged with the stored entertainment content at a set-top box.

1        80.    A set-top box, comprising:

2            a programmed processor that presents a user with a menu of advertisement  
3 types;

4            means for receiving a user selection of a selected advertisement type from  
5 the menu of advertisements;

6            advertisement receiving means for receiving the selected advertisement from  
7 a service provider;

8            content receiving means for receiving entertainment content from the service  
9 provider; and

10           the programmed processor merging the entertainment content with the  
11 advertisement for presentation to the user.

12  
13        81.    The apparatus according to claim 80, further comprising a storage device  
14 forming a part of the set-top box to store the selected advertisement.

15  
16        82.    The apparatus according to claim 80, further comprising a storage device  
17 coupled to the set-top box to store the selected advertisement.

18  
19        83.    The apparatus according to claim 80, wherein the advertisement receiving  
20 means comprises a tuner.



1 86. An advertising method, comprising:

2 presenting a television viewer with a menu of advertisements from which to  
3 select an advertisement for viewing;

4 receiving an advertisement selection from the television viewer; and  
5 presenting the television viewer with the selected advertisement.  
6

7 87. The method according to claim 88, further comprising:

8 presenting the television viewer with a menu of advertisement types;

9 receiving an advertisement type selection from the television viewer; and

10 presenting the television view with the selected advertisement according to  
11 the selected advertisement type.  
12

13 88. The method according to claim 88, further comprising charging an advertiser  
14 for presenting the advertisement based upon a number of times the advertisement  
15 is selected by a group of television viewers.  
16

17 89. The method according to claim 87, further comprising charging an advertiser  
18 for presenting the advertisement based upon a number of times the advertisement  
19 is selected by a group of television viewers and based upon the selected  
20 advertisement type presented.  
21

1        90.    An advertising method, comprising:  
2            presenting the television viewer with a menu of advertisement types;  
3            receiving an advertisement type selection from the television viewer; and  
4            presenting the television viewer with the selected advertisement according  
5            to the selected advertisement type.

6  
7        91.    The method according to claim 90, further comprising charging an advertiser  
8            for presenting the advertisement based upon the selected advertisement type  
9            presented.

10  
11       92.    The method according to claim 90, wherein the advertisement type is  
12       selected from a first and a second advertisement type, with the first advertisement  
13       type being considered more intrusive to the viewer than the second advertisement  
14       type.

15  
16       93.    The method according to claim 92, wherein the presenting comprises  
17       presenting the first advertisement type for a first period of time if selected, and  
18       presenting the second advertisement type for a second period of time if selected,  
19       with the first period of time being less than the second period of time.